

REMARKS

The Examiner's Action mailed on September 4, 2003 has been received and its contents have been carefully considered.

Claims 1-14 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 2, 5, 8, 9 and 12 are canceled without prejudice or waiver. Claims 3, 6, 10 and 13 are amended herein to be in independent form.

In the Action, the Examiner objects to the drawings as failing to include certain reference signs, namely reference sign "104" identifying the final decider in Figure 4, and the reference sign "JL" identifying a control signal, both of which are mentioned in paragraph 33 on page 13 of the specification. A corrected Figure 4 showing both of these reference signs is attached to this Amendment as a replacement drawing. Review and approval of the replacement drawing is respectfully requested.

The Examiner objects to the specification as having a minor informality in paragraph 30 on page 12. The informality identified by the Examiner has been corrected in this Amendment. No new matter is involved. Review and approval of the amendment to the specification is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 9 and 10 have been objected to because of a number of informalities identified in the Action by the Examiner. These informalities have been corrected in this Amendment in the manner suggested by the Examiner. In the case of claims 1, 2 and 9, which have been canceled, correction of the identified informalities is now reflected in the claims to which the limitations of the canceled claims have been moved.

In the Action, claims 1, 2, 8 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Furukawa et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,797,931) in view of Hasegawa (U.S. Patent No. 6,026,419), and claims 5 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Furukawa et al. in view of Hasegawa, and further in view of Denenberg (U.S. Patent No. 3,937,899). It is respectfully submitted that the rejections are moot in view of the cancellation herein of claims 1, 2, 5, 8, 9 and 12.

It is noted that claims 3 and 10 have not been rejected, and therefore presumed that they would be allowable if put into independent form including all of the limitations of their respective base claims and any intervening claims. Accordingly, claim 3 has been amended

herein to include the limitations of canceled claims 1 and 2, and claim 10 amended to include the limitations of canceled claims 8 and 9.

The Examiner's early indication that claims 4, 6, 7, 11, 13 and 14 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, is acknowledged with appreciation. Accordingly, claim 6 has been rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of claims 1 and 5, and claim 13 has been rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of claims 8 and 12. Claims 4, 7, 11 and 14 have not been amended because they depend from amended claims 3 and 10, which are allowable for the reasons discussed above.

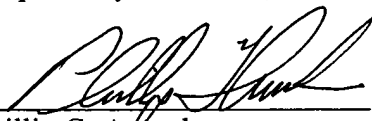
Based on the foregoing, it is submitted that this application, as amended, is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, notice of allowance and the passing of this case to issue are respectfully requested.

This amendment increases to four the number of independent claims. Therefore, payment in the amount of \$86.00 is submitted herewith for one independent claim in excess of the three allowed without additional fee. Should payment be accidentally missing or insufficient in amount, or should any other fees, including extension fees, be due, please charge any deficiency to our Deposit Account No. 18-0002 and advise the undersigned accordingly.

If the Examiner believes that a conference would be of value in expediting the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is hereby invited to telephone the undersigned counsel to arrange for such a conference.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date


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